

POLLIO:

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ELEGIAC ODE.

WRITTEN IN THE WOOD NEAR R—— CASTLE,

1762.

HÆC JOVEN SENTIRE, DEQUIET CONCTUS,
SPEM BONAM CERTAMQUE DOMUM REPORTO.

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O X F O R D,

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS.

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P O L I O

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WRITTEN IN THE WOOD NEAR Y — CASTLE

1862

THE JOHN L. LEWIS COLLECTION
OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

1862

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*I*T has been often said that Fiction is the most proper Field for Poetry. If it is always so, the Writer of this little Piece acknowledges it is a circumstance against him. The following Ode was first suggested, and the Ideas contained in it raised, on revisiting the Ruins and Woods that had been the Scene of his early Amusements with a deserving Brother, who died in his Twenty-first Year.

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I have been often told that Fiction is the most proper Field for Poetry. If it is always so, the Writer of this little Piece acknowledges it in a circumstance against him. The following Ode was first suggested, and the Lines composed in it were on receiving the Lines and Words that had been the scene of his early Amusement with a delectable Brother, who died in his Twenty-fifth Year.

P O L L I O:

O D E.

I.

THE peaceful Evening breathes her balmy store,
The playful School-boys wanton o'er the Green;
Where spreading Poplars shade the Cottage Door,
The Villagers in rustic joy convene.

II.

Amid the secret Windings of the Wood,
With solemn Meditation let me stray;
This is the Hour, when, to the Wise and Good,
The heavenly Maid repays the Toils of Day.

III.

The River murmurs, and the breathing Gale
Whispers the gently waving Boughs among,
The Star of Evening glimmers o'er the Dale,
And leads the silent Host of Heaven along.

IV.

How bright, emerging o'er yon broom-clad Height,
The silver Empress of the Night appears!
Yon limpid Pool reflects a stream of Light,
And faintly in its breast the Woodland bears.

V.

The Waters tumbling o'er their rocky Bed,
Solemn and constant, from yon Dell resound;
The lonely Hearths blaze o'er the distant Glade;
The Bat, low-wheeling, skims the dusky Ground.

VI.

August and hoary, o'er the sloping Dale,
The Gothic Abbey rears its sculptur'd Towers ;
Dull through the Roofs resounds the whistling Gale ;
Dark Solitude among the Pillars lowers.

VII.

Where yon old Trees bend o'er a Place of Graves,
And solemn shade a Chapel's sad remains,
Where yon scath'd Poplar through the Window waves,
And, twining round, the hoary Arch sustains ;

VIII.

There, oft, at Dawn, as One forgot behind,
Who longs to follow, yet unknowing where,
Some hoary Shepherd, o'er his Staff reclin'd,
Pores on the Graves, and sighs a broken Prayer.

IX.

High o'er the Pines, that with their dark'ning shade
 Surround yon craggy Bank, the Castle rears
 Its crumbling Turrets: still its towery Head
 A warlike mien, a fullen grandeur wears.

X.

So, midst the snow of Age, a boastful air
 Still on the war-worn Veteran's Brow attends;
 Still his big Bones his youthful Prime declare,
 Though, trembling o'er the feeble Crutch, he bends.

XI.

Wild round the Gates the dusky Wall-flowers creep,
 Where oft the Knights the beauteous Dames have led;
 Gone is the Bower, the Grot a ruin'd heap,
 Where Bays and Ivy o'er the fragments spread.

XII.

'Twas here our Sires exulting from the Fight,
Great in their bloody arms, march'd o'er the Lea,
Eying their rescued Fields with proud delight;
Now lost to them! and, ah how chang'd to me!

XIII.

This Bank, the River, and the fanning Breeze,
The dear Idea of my PoLLIO bring;
So shone the Moon through these soft nodding Trees,
When here we wander'd in the Eyes of Spring.

XIV.

When April's smiles the flowery Lawn adorn,
And modest Cowslips deck the Streamlet's side,
When fragrant Orchards to the roseate Morn
Unfold their Bloom, in Heaven's own Colours dy'd;

XV.

So fair a Blossom gentle POLLIO wore,
These were the Emblems of his healthful Mind;
To Him the letter'd Page display'd its Lore,
To Him bright Fancy all her Wealth resign'd:

XVI.

Him, with her purest Flames, the Muse endow'd,
Flames never to th' illiberal Thought allied;
The sacred Sisters led where Virtue glow'd
In all her Charms; he saw, he felt, and died.

XVII.

Oh Partner of my Infant Griefs and Joys!
Big with the Scenes now past my Heart o'erflows,
Bids each Endearment, fair as once, to rise,
And dwells luxurious on her melting Woes.

XVIII.

Oft with the rifing Sun when Life was new,
Along the Woodland have I roam'd with Thee;
Oft by the Moon have brush'd the Evening Dew,
When all was fearless Innocence and Glee.

XIX.

The fainted Well where yon bleak Hill declines,
Has oft been conscious of those happy Hours;
But now the Hill, the River crown'd with Pines,
And fainted Well have loft their cheering Powers,

XX.

For Thou art gone — My Guide, my Friend, oh where,
Where haft thou fled, and left me here behind!
My tenderest Wifh, my Heart to Thee was bare,
Oh, now cut off each paffage to thy Mind!

XXI.

How dreary is the Gulph, how dark, how void,
 The trackless Shores that never were repast!
 Dread Separation! on the Depth untry'd
 Hope falters, and the Soul recoils aghast.

XXII.

Wide round the spacious Heavens I cast my eyes;
 And shall these Stars glow with immortal fire,
 Still shine the *lifeless* glories of the Skies,
 And could thy bright, thy LIVING Soul expire?

XXIII.

Far be the thought — the Pleasures most sublime,
 The Glow of Friendship, and the virtuous Tear,
 The tow'ring Wish that scorns the bounds of Time,
 Chill'd in this Vale of Death, but languish here.

XXIV.

So plant the Vine on Norway's wintry Land,
The languid Stranger feebly buds, and dies:
Yet there's a Clime where Virtue shall expand
With godlike strength, beneath her native Skies.

XXV.

The lonely Shepherd on the Mountain's side,
With patience waits the rosy opening Day;
The Mariner at Midnight's darksome tide,
With chearful hope expects the Morning Ray.

XXVI.

Thus I, on Life's storm-beaten Ocean tost,
In mental vision view the happy Shore,
Where POLLIO beckons to the peaceful Coast,
Where Fate and Death divide the Friends no more.

XXVII.

Oh that some kind, some pitying kindred Shade,
Who now, perhaps, frequents this solemn Grove,
Would tell the awful Secrets of the Dead,
And from my Eyes the mortal Film remove !

XXVIII.

Vain is the Wish ——— yet surely not in vain
Man's Bosom glows with that celestial Fire,
Which scorns Earth's Luxuries, which smiles at Pain,
And wings his Spirit with sublime Desire.

XXIX.

To fan this Spark of Heaven, this Ray divine,
Still, oh my Soul ! still be thy dear Employ ;
Still thus to wander through the Shades be thine,
And swell thy Breast with visionary Joy.

XXX.

So to the dark-brow'd Wood, or sacred Mount,
In antient days, the holy Seers retir'd,
And, led in vision, drank at SILOE's Fount,
While rising Extacies their Bosoms fir'd ;

XXXI.

Restor'd Creation bright before them rose,
The burning Defarts smil'd as EDEN's Plains,
One friendly Shade the Wolf and Lambkin chose,
The flowery Mountains sung, "MESSIAH REIGNS!"

XXXII.

Though fainter Raptures my cold Breast inspire,
Yet, let me oft frequent this solemn Scene,
Oft to the Abbey's shatter'd Walls retire,
What time the Moonshine dimly gleams between.

XXXIII

There, where the Cross in hoary ruin nods,
 And weeping Yews o'er shade the letter'd Stones,
 While midnight Silence wraps these drear Abodes,
 And soothes me wand'ring o'er my kindred Bones,

XXXIV

Let kindled Fancy view the glorious Morn,
 When from the bursting Graves the Just shall rise,
 All Nature smiling, and, by Angels borne,
 MESSIAH'S Cross far blazing o'er the Skies.

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IIXXX.

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Though fainter Raptures my cold Breast inspire,
 Yet, let me oft revisit this solemn Scene,
 Oft to the Abbey's hallowed Walls retire,
 What time the Moonbeams dimly gleams between.